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MARCH 1936

Acacia's Growing In San Diego

By C. I. Jerabek

Comfort and Joy In Gardening

By John Fletcher

Growing Dahlias From Seed

By H. Lodge

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ACACIA'S GROWING IN SAN DIEGO
By C. I. Jerabek

Association Activities . . .

By ADA PERRY

The March meeting of the Floral association will see an event looked forward to for some time. Madame Akemitogo, little Japanese lecturer on flower arranging, will definitely appear at that time and give her colorful talk on the ancient Japanese science of the art and its modern adaptations.

Much is said about Japanese arrangements in print and on platforms, but always by Caucasians. Madame will bring her knowledge from the flowery kingdom itself and will add considerably to the interest of her offering by up-to-date American interpretations of it.

The meeting is as usual, on the third Tuesday of the month, and the place the Chamber of Commerce auditorium. The date is the 17th.

The flower show will be held the month after, but what dates in April is not yet settled, nor the place where the show will be held. Conferences with the park board and Exposition directors are being held, Mrs. Greer announces.

The first garden tour of the year is promised by Mrs. Greer in March and it will be an inspection of the Burpee nasturtium fields in Chula Vista by invitation from Mr. David Burpee and T. M. Little, in charge of the planting. Dates will be announced.

Mr. Burpee's third national preview of his super-double nasturtiums in San Diego in February was one of the most successful affairs ever sponsored by the Floral association. Mrs. Greer introduced Mr. Burpee wearing a lovely corsage of the super-double nasturtiums fashioned for her by Miss Alice Rainford. More garden lovers came than the Chamber of Commerce could hold, speaking well for the flowers, Mr. Burpee and the Floral association membership, all of whom received invitations. If any of them stayed at home, they haven't been found yet.

Acacias were the attraction at the February meeting, with C. I. Jerabek on the platform. Mr. Jerabek not only gave many interesting facts related to acacias that no one else ever knows, much less mentions, but he brought 42 kinds of acacias, by actual count; two of each kind and every one labeled and passed them down the aisles for members to revel in the sumptuous experience of examining new varieties with the names before their eyes. It was really wonderful, and please, kind fates, may this be a regular occurrence. After all, it's vain and vapid to look at specimens with the names completely flown from one's memory after hearing them only once.

A list of the acacias shown by Mr. Jerabek is published elsewhere in this issue and it's valuable. Remember to remember it, please. The specimens taken home that night were much appreciated by all and sundry.

Fifth Annual Meeting of California Garden Club Federation will be held in Oakland, April 3rd and 4th; headquarters at Hotel Leamington. Sessions will open at 9:30 A. M. Friday, with reports of chairmen on state committees. There will be exhibits from member clubs and very fine bird exhibit in connection with meeting. There will be six lectures on subjects of interest to Garden Club members, illustrated with slides.

Election of officers for next year will take place at the Saturday morning business meeting. Meeting will conclude with the official dinner held at the Hotel Leamington.

Comfort and Joy in Gardening . . .

By JOHN FLETCHER

. . . *The Use of Organic Materials in the Soil of Southern California*

There is no subject more valuable or more interesting to the gardeners, horticulturists, and farmers of Southern California than that of the supply of organic material for the soil. Natural organic material is the general term for all kinds of decaying vegetable and animal matter found under natural conditions, and it is the vegetable, or greatly predominating part in this material which forms the very basis of comfortable or really enjoyable gardening in this very favored part of the world.

Unfortunately, however, natural vegetable organic matter is more or less lacking in the majority of Southern California soils, and this is, of course, because of the very simple reason that the greater part of this semi-tropical land of ours was, until comparatively recent times, a vast desert area, with insufficient vegetation to allow decaying vegetable matter to accumulate. Again, in this connection it may be well to point out that this apparent scarcity of organic material in Southern California soils is intensified by the burning action of the hot summer sun on the scanty accumulation of plant remains, and thatt his destruction takes place mostly, of course, in the wide exposed or unsheltered parts of the state. In the somewhat sheltered parts of the state, however, as in canyons and wooded areas, for example, natural organic matter does accumulate to a more or less greater extent, but unfortunately again, our meager supply of this very valuable material is being rapidly depleted by the ruthless activities of various venders in soils and fertilizers; and before very long the only residue left will be confined to large private estates and inaccessible parts of public domains—that is, inaccessible to common vehicles of transportation.

The fertility of productivity of the soils in Southern California, or for that matter in any other part of the country, is usually measured by the health and abundance of garden plants, horticultural products, and farming crops of the very highest quality, and this can generally be attained and permanently retained in the majority of Southern Caliofrnia soils by good tillage or cultivation, on the one hand, and by periodical liberal supplies of organic material, on the other.

Here at this point various intensely interesting and important questions naturally arise, and the first one is: just exactly what do we mean by natural organic material? Second, what are the functions of natural organic material in Southern California soils? Third —is there any way of manufacturing or producing organic material in sufficient quantities to meet our particular gardening, horticultural, and farming needs?

In answering these questions, we shall leave out the horticultural and farming interest for the present, and confine ourselves strictly to gardening processes. We may say, then, that natural organic material may be further defined, amplified, and classified as follows:

(a) Litter, or undecomposed vegetable and animal matter, exemplified in surface accumulations of fallen leaves, dead stems and branches of herbacious plants, small twigs and other woody parts of trees and shrubs, together with traces of animal matter.

(b) Leaf mould, that rather hard to define accumulation of coarse, dark-colored matter, which usually contains one or all of the following items of roughage in their first stages of decomposition: dead leaves and twigs of trees or shrubs, leaves, stems, and roots of herbacious plants, toad stools and other fungi, traces of animal matter, together with an extremely variable quantity of fine humus, loam, and sand.

(c) Humus or well-decomposed vegetable and animal matter; in other words that dark-colored and granular or fine-grained, spongy substance which represents an advanced stage in decomposition, and is the direct result of well-marked advanced decomposition of the different kinds of vegetable matter already mentioned under the heading of leaf mould, together with variable traces of animal remains.

(d) Water and gases, or the final results of complete decomposition of vegetable and animal matter in various kinds of soils.

I have been very careful in stating this somewhat odd classification of natural organic material for Southern California soils, because there exists a great deal of confusion amongst the gardening fraternity regarding this whole matter. So-called leaf mould, for example, as sold by inexperienced soil vendors, varies in weight from a few pounds to the sack, and which can easily be lifted by one hand, to somewhere about sixty or seventy pounds to the sack, and which can only be lifted, by some people at any rate, with much difficulty by both hands, the vast difference in the weight being caused by an overabundance of dead leaves in the first instance ,and an equally overabundant supply of loam or sand in the second. An honest sack of leaf mould should contain a liberal supply of rather coarse, partially decomposed vegetable material, any somewhere about fifty per cent of this, with about thirty per cent rather weighty well-marked, fine-grained humus, and some twenty per cent of litter.

Equally confusing to gardeners and even to some so-called soil experts is the term humus; in fact, some experts refuse to use the word in connection with any kind of soil analysis, contending that term is too vague and that it embraces far too many gradations of decaying vegetable matter. For the practical gardener, however, some sort of rough but useful classification is very necessary, and it's to this large class of plant enthusiasts who are readers of California Gardens that this somewhat rambling article is addressed.

(See Page 9)

Acacia's Growing in San Diego . . .

By C. I. JERABEK

. . . *Where They May Be Found*

A. aneura (Mulga) Australia . . . . . Mission and Presido Hills Parks
A. armata (Kangroo-Thorn) Australia Presido Hills Park.
A. Baileyana (Cootamundra-Wattle) New South Wales . . . . . Balboa, Mission Hills, Washington Pks.
A. Baileyana var. viridifolia (green-leaved A) New South Wales . Balboa Park.
A. Betchei, New South Wales . . . . . Miss K. O. Session, Soledad Terrace, Pacific Beach anl Scripps Biological Station, La Jolla.
A. bancroyti . . . . . Scripps Biological Station.
A. caldmifolia (Broom-Wattle) S. Australia . . . . . Miss K. O. Sessions, Soledad Terrace, Pacific Beach.
A. cultriformis (Knife-A.) New S. Wales . . . . . Balboa Park.
A. cyanophylla (Blue-leaf Wattle) W. Australia . . . . . Balboa Park.
A. cyclops, W. Australia . . . . Balboa Park.
A. decora, Queensland, New S. Wales Presido Hills, Washington Parks, Scripps B. Station.
A. decurrens (Green-Wattle) Australia Balboa, Mission Hills Parks.
A. decurrens var. dealbata (Silver-Wattle) Australia . . . . Balboa Park, Scripps Biological Sta.
A. decurrens var. mollis (Black-Wattle) Australia . . . . . Mission Hills Park.
A. decurrens var. leichardti, Australia Scripps Biological Station, La Jolla.
A. Dietrichiana, Queensland . . . Miss K.O. Sessions, Soledad Terrace, P.B.
A. discolor (Bronze A) S. Australia, Tasmania . . . . . Scripps Biological Station, Miss K. O. Sessions.
A. elata (Cedar-Wattle) New S.Wales Balboa Park.
A. flexifolia (Fuzzy-Wattle) . . Scripps Biological Station.
A. falcata (sickle-leaved A) Queensland, New South Wales . . Scripps Biological Station.
A. Farnesiana (Cassie) Texas, Mexico, Asia, Africa, Australia . .. . Broadway Extention near entrance to Emerald Hills Golf Grounds.
A. glaucescens, Queensland, New South Wales . . . . . Scripps Biological Station.
A. hakeoides . . . . . Scripps Biological Station.
A. linearis, Australia . . . . . Scripps Biological Station.
A. longifolia (Sydney-Golden Wattle) Australia . . . . . Balboa Park.
A. linifolia var. prominens, Queensland, New South Wales . . . Miss K.O. Sessions, Soledad Terrace.
A. macradenia, Queensland . . . Mission Hills Park.
A. leptocladia . . . . . Scripps Biological Station, Miss K. O. Sessions.
A. melanoxylon (Blackwood A) Australia . . . . . Balboa Park.
A. obliqua (small-leaved A) Australia Miss K.O. Sessions, Soledad Terrace P.B.
A. obtusata, New South Wales . . Balboa Park.
A. pendula (Weeping Myall) Queensland, New S. Wales . . . . Mission and Presido Hills Park.

(Continued on Page 8)

Gardening . . .

Past, Present and Future

Gardening in America is what might be called an open-faced proposition, with the gardener having an eye to the attitude and the observation of the public, sometimes even more than to his own pleasure and satisfaction in his outdoor home activities. Quite to the contrary were the gardens of pioneer times, as well as the gardens of the old countries. There a garden is a place protected by walls, hedges, or barriers of various kinds, to prevent the entrance of intruders.

Whether the open-faced style of gardening or the protected style of gardening is most desirable depends somewhat on location and environment, but as much on the disposition or natural characteristics of the gardener. Many of those who engage in gardening, especially the new beginners, do so from a desire to display their knowledge and activities, and this type works better in the public eye; whereas the elder gardeners who garden for their own satisfaction are inclined to be retiring in their methods, and such demand protection in one form or another.

In any case present-day gardening makes of the garden an outdoor living room which calls for privacy to an extent which may best be effected by hedges of plants, shrubs, or trees, rather than walls or fences. Many types of boundary-line plantings and methods of dividing the garden are available to the discriminating ones. It is only a question of individual preference and selection of material best adapted for the location and environment.

Looking to the future, we may vision the garden as divided into two parts: the open-faced garden for the benefit of the passers-by, and the garden close, as they call it in Britain, for the satisfaction and use of the owner. The former is nothing more or less than a sort of public garden, giving the public the benefit of something which has been produced by the owner. Just how far one wants to go in this direction, and just how far one should go in the direction of the perhaps more selfish or restricted and

(Continued on Page 8)

Early History and Origin of the Rose

By MRS. GEORGE KETCH

There seems to be very little known of the early history of the Rose, or, who were its first cultivators. Mention is made of it in the early Egyptian manuscripts tho nothing concerning it can be distinguished with any degree of certainty on the Egyptian monuments which are left us. A noted French traveler writes that he carefully searched all the monuments in Egypt and could find neither sculpture nor painting, figure nor hieroglyphic that would lead us to suppose the Rose was cultivated by the ancient Egyptians; and yet it is thought to have been from the fact that several varieties are now found there.

It is quite probable that the Rose was planted in the celebrated gardens of Babylon about 1200 B.C. and about that time it also appeared in Persia. It is vtry certain that it was cultivated by the Jews during the reign of King Solomon about two centuries later, as it is referred to in the Scriptures. We are all familiar with the reference made to the Rose of Sharon in the Song of Solomon. About 700 years later, according to the Book of Ecclesiasticus, the Jews possessed beautiful gardens of roses, particularly at Jerico. The Greeks cultivated the Rose at an early period, during the time of Homer. In his Illiad and Odyssey, he uses the brilliant colors of the Rose to describe the rising sun. Heroditas the Greek historian who lived about 400 years before the Christian era, mentions that in Macedonian gardens there were roses of sixty petals which grew spontaneously, without culture, and emitted a most delightful perfume. From the earliest period, the Greeks gave to the rose preference over all other plants, distinguishing it as the queen of flowers.

Ancient writings are full of allusions to the rose and fabulous accounts of its origin. According to one writer, the stem was originally free from thorns until the entrance of Ahrimanus, the evil one, into the wold, and the thorns gradually appeared as mankind became more corrupt. From its brilliant colors, blending into each other as the shades of night seem to melt into the glowing brilliancy of the rising sun, it was frequently consecrated to Aurora the Goddess of the Dawn. It was also consecrated to Harpocratts, the parton of Silence, of which it was considered the symbol. Thus the expression sub rosa (under the rose) signified that all that was said should remain secret. It was a custom in some of the northern countries to suspend a rose over the dining table on certain occasions, reminding the guests that silence should be observed concerning all that might be said during the meal.

There are numerous fables and legends of the rose among the peoples of the East, and while they are not necessarily history they give us some idea of the important place the rose has always held, and of its poetic beauty. During all periods it has been used abundantly in ceremonies and festivals, religious as well as public and pivrate fetes. There was a custom among medical men of antiquity of using a crown of roses to aleviate pain in the head. It was also thought to possess qualities for destroying fumes of wine. (No doubt in many cases the crown performed the two fold duty.) At Rome, the custom of wearing these crowns of roses was permissible only at certain festivals. If worn at other times, the offender was punished, sometimes imprisoned.

The use of roses in adorning tombs and burial places was very generally practiced by the Romans. The plants were continually renewed and regarded as sacred. The first Christians disapproved of the use of the rose at their religious festivals or as ornaments on tombs, owing to its connection with pagan mythology, and the custom became extinct for a time; but later they relaxed from such strict ideas and adopted the use of not only the rose but other flowers as well.

In the Middle Ages, at the beginning of the 15th century, there is evidence of the rose having been cultivated in Great Britain for commercial purposes, and of the water distilled from it being used to give flavor to a variety of dishes and to wash the hands at meals. They were evidently raised in such small quantities and were in such demand that they were frequently paid by vassals to their lords, both in England and France. Among the New Year's gifts to Queen Mary in 1556 was a bottle of rose water. In times of chivalry, the rose was often placed by knights in their shields, implying that sweetness should always be the companion of courage.

Since its earliest history, the rose has been a favorite. It was the cherished flower of the ancient poets. It was the emblem of beauty, youth, modesty and innocence.

S. B. Pasrons in his book, The History of the Rose, published in 1847 pays the following beautiful tribute to the rose; "The beauty of the rose has preserved it and its reputation for many years. The most populous nations, the largest cities, the most wealthy and powerful kingdoms have disappeared from the earth or have been involved in the revolutions of empires, while a simple flower has escaped them all and still remains to tell its story. It has seen a hundred generations succeed each other and pass away. It has traveled through ages without changing its destiny or losing its character. The homage rendered and love borne it have always been the same. Now, as in the earliest periods of the world's history it is decreed first place in the floral kingdom. In these days, as well as ancient days, it is the Queen of Flowers, because it is always the most beautiful and because no other flower can furnish half its charm."

VISTA GARDEN CLUB

Officers:

Mrs. J. W. Leezer, President
Mrs. G. G. Charlton, Vice President
Mrs. Harold Sobel, Secretary
Mrs. W. H. Hawkins, Treasurer

The Vista Garden Club's next meeting will take place Friday,

(See Page 8)

Growing Dahlias from Seed . . .

By H. LODGE

. . . *A Beautiful Flower That Blooms From August Until November*

Dahlias that are grown from seeds will bloom as early, and produce equally as good clumps, as those grown from tubers. The interesting part in growing from seeds, is always the possibility of creating a new wonder in the Dahlia World. as the development of new varieties start in this manner. Therefore it is of utmost importance that an excellent quality of seeds be used.

Seeds should be planted in flats three to four inches in depth. Planting date about the middle of March. They should be filled to within one inch from the top, with fine garden soil, and sifted leaf mold well mixed. Plant the seeds about one inch apart, and cover about half inch deep with the same mixture and press down firmly with a flat board. I have also used a mixture of fine garden soil, and a reliable "tule peat" with excellent results. Moisten the soil in flats thoroughly with a fine spray; however, do not permit them to dry out.

The flats must be placed in a warm location, and by all means see that this is certain as they must be protected from cold nights. Germination will begin in six or seven days, although it will probably require three or four weeks before it is completed, as dahlia seeds are rather irregular in germinating. When plants are large enough to move they can be placed into pots from which they can be planted into the garden; however, this is not absolutely necessary, even though results are usually obtained since the plant gets a better start.

When planting in the open, holes should be made about five inches deep, and the plant placed in the bottom with the soil well firmed around the roots. A handful of bone meal is always a help if well mixed with the soil before the planting. Water the plant well, and as a protection against cutworms place a collar around each plant, pushing it down an inch or two in the soil. Place a stake that is six feet long, about three inches away from the plant. This is advisable as stakes put in when roots are developed might damage them. As the plants grow, fill in the holes, and remove the collars.

Blooms should begin to show early in August and from that time you will begin to have one thrill after another, until all plants have bloomed. Of course you are bound to have some inferior ones; these should be taken out and destroyed. It is also possible that one or two plans may not bloom. Keep these roots and plant the following season, they may be better than any of the others. It is well to make notes of the better ones, tagging each with a number corresponding with a number in your note book, including the date blomed, type of dahlia, color, length of stem, keeping qualities, etc. Some of the finest dahlias ever produced in the world have originated in the gardens of those that enjoy experimenting with seeds. Remember nature shows no favoritism.

What to Plant During March

From the middle of March until the last, is considered one of the best months during the year for planting seeds, plants and bulbs. Nearly all danger of frost is past by that time and preparation of the garden should be made during the early part of the month.

Seeds which can be sown in the open ground are: Ageratum, Alyssum, Arctotis, Balsam, Calendula, Calliopsis, Candytuft, Centaurea, Clarkia, Annual Chrysanthemum, Daisies, Four O'Clock, Gypsophila, Larkspur, Lupin, Marigold, Mignonette, Nasturtium, Nemophila, Nigella, Poppy, and Scabiosa.

The varieties of plants which should be considered, are: Asters, Columbine, Canterbury Bells, Coreopsis, Carnations, Foxglove, Blue Lace Flowtr, Ageratum, African Daisy, Double Daisy, Pinks, Geum, African Marigold, Chinese Forget-Me-Not, Heliotrops, Shasta Daisy, Salpiglossis, Stocks, Delphinium, Vebenars, Snapdragon, and Zinnias.

Of course the planting of bulbs do not include a large number, however, the varieties listed are wonderful flowers. They include, Caladiums, Cannas, Tuberoses, Dahlias, but near the end of the month at the earliest, and of course Gladiolus.

Weeds also make a big growth this month, and it is well to keep them out of the garden, since they absorb nutrition that should be kept in the soil for the flowers which will be planted.

GLADS BECOME ACCLIMATED

A change of climate often affects the general health of the human being; why not that of Glads?

It has been my experience that many Glads coming to me from other states, have done much better the second year in my garden.

I realize that variable seasons and weather conditions are responsible for many changes. Also the food elements in my garden soil may change somewhat each year. However, having purchased the same varieties two different years and from different places, I have had similar results. That is, the first year gave only poor to average blooms and plants; and the year following showed splendid flowers from the same bulbs.

This does not follow for all varieties, as there are some bulbs of apparently exceptional strength and vitality.

"KEEP PERENNIAL PLANTS GOING, TIP TO GROWERS"

Keep seeds of perennial plants going. Perennials in San Diego gardens bloom quicker and more abundantly, but wear out faster than in other places. Columbine, double daisies, dephinium, geum, pinks, sweet william and verbent are some which should be sown every year or every other year to keep garden's stock well supplied. Delphinium is especially important as it is so popular and decorative.

Begonia Club Notes . . .

. . . *A Series of Letters From all Pasts of the United States*

Missoula, Montana,
Dec. 1, 1935.

This series of letters stems to be unusually interesting. The Bulletin on old begonias seems to indicate that vigorous varieties survive and become popular, while those lacking in vigor become rare and finally disappear. I have had only about five years' experience with begonias, and only in house culture at that, but it seems to me that vigor is by far the most important asset which a begonia can have. A vigorous begonia of almost any variety is a joy to contemplate, while a weak specimen of a handsome variety is a sorry sight. For one who, like myself, has room for only 30 to 40 large plants and from 75 to 100 small replacements, vigor is a prime necessity.

When I first began with begonias I was primarily interested in their flowers, and especially in the length of their blooming season. A begonia which bloomed most of the year was prized the most. As I gain experience I appreciate more and more the decorative value of handsome durable foliage and shapely habit of growth. Of course when one can get both handsome foliage and long blooming season, that is just fine; but if I had to choose between a begonia with handsome foliage and a good habit which blooms for only about 3 or 4 months, and another variety which blooms for 9 months but has different foliage and scrawny habit, I would choose the first. If I were preparing a scale of points for begonias, I would allot more points for vigor than for anything else. Next would come handsome, durable foliage and shapely habit of growth. I would place flowering third.

At the present time in my collection the following varieties are particularly happy and outstanding: Paul Bruant, Nitida, Orrell Schmidtiana, Haageana, Croftonii, Corallina Lucerne, Desdemonia.

The last, Desdtmonia, I raised from a cutting; at first sight it seems to be the same as C. Lucerne, but as I compare the two, standing side by side, I see that Desdemonia has slightly larger leaves of somewhat heavier texture; more vigorous growth, more branching habit and larger flowers. It could easily pass for an unusually fine C. Lucerne. It is a decided acquisition. I have been trying to get a specimen of B. Mismarkii. Our Montana winter has just started. How I wish I lived in California.

"PROF..

Penacook, New Hampshire,
Dec. 13, 1935.

The letters are with me again. To read them carefully requires all the time I can spare for two or three days. It is impossible to recall all the letters contain. It has been an unusual fall hereabouts. So far, we have had only three days of cold weather, whereas two years ago at this time there was about six weeks of rather inclement weather. I was out in a neighbor's wood lot the other day to get eight varieties of evergreen boughs for different friends. In protected sections of the deep woods some of the ferns were still green which I thought emarkable at this season.

I find after growing Compta for about five years that it will tower to the sky regardless of what one does to it. Since it is my favorite begonia I always try to have one plant of it. I have one now started from a three year old plant last August and it is now fifteen inches tall. I am going to cut the top off for a new plant and see if it will not branch out. I have decided for myself that Acutangularis is a much better name than one of two words. I like it immensely. It is a small plant but very vigorous and is sending out laterals already. The leaves are wavy and reminds one of certain kinds of silk; in fact it has a silken appearance. The little red Compta is a slow grower but most attractive. My Peltata of which I obtained the original about five years ago grows about two new leaves a year. Has not sent out any laterals so far. It has no enemies as so many other begonias have. I have followed "Prof's" advice in using Black leaf 40. I tried using the cold water treatment and it was not effective in my case. I also found that Haageana is not molested by household pests. It seems impossible for me to keep a plant of C. Lucerne in the house any more than a week before thrips appear. I frequently wonder if the eggs come from the soil—they must be present somewhere. They seem to be clean when brought in.

Nellie Bly and Nitida are alive but none too vigorous; perhaps they will take a spurt along in January. I saw a Wallow in bloom for the first time during the early fall. The blooms were waxy white with many prominent yellow stamens. The plant had several clusters of pleasing bloom. Some call certain begonias "Wax plants". It is difficult to know what they are talking about sometimes. The names of plants are so provincial.

The varigated semperflorens adds beauty to any collection; the ones that I have, send out many branches and the leaves do not fall readily. If given a large pot and allowed to grow by itself I can imagine that few begonias would be more attractive. When crowded together none of them can be seen to advantage and they do not grow as vigorously. I should try to follow some definate schedule in naming new varieties. For example, Lita originated the new Superba strain; I should use superba rubra, Superba alba, Superba robusta etc., etc.

That would indicate to the members that a certain new plant had originated from such a source. It is true beyond preadventure that the seedlings from the Superba seeds would vary considtrably. I presume that is to be expected. Seeds do not get sufficiently good start here in

New England to do much with them before early fall, and that is too late for best results. I have decided that after careful observations spring and early summer are the months to start new begonia cuttings; however I find that most of the cuttings that have been started in early fall do well for awhile, then cease to develop at all and leaves begin to fall and all that is left is just a stalk.

I believe in a former letter I told of one country woman who called one begonia "Kitchen begonia," another "Parlor begonia," another "Bird on the wing" and still a fourth one she called "Falling begonia," the latter name because the flowers fell quickly. What do you think of those for real names that I encountered the past summer!)

"Bill."

Peabody, Mass., Dtc. 22, 1935.

(Shall we name the varigated semperflorens, B. Semperflorens varigata, or has someone a better name? Pleast don't wish such a name as Waxoia on the poor thing! I think "Bill's" suggestion about Superba rubra a good one. At least it would indicate parentage. Prof. you are surely a descendant of Spartans! You are right, but I am glad I am not obliged to discard my fair and frail kinds. It would hurt. I wish you would prepare a scale of points for judging begonias for us. I am sure it would be helpful to us all. My Dichotoma bloomed, a spray of small white flowers on a long peduncle. It is nothing to write home about.

"Bill" came to see me, and my begonias this fall and brought me a nice Templanii. It now has 9 sprays of bloom. Fanny Giron is in bloom; also Sachsen, Bar Harbor, (since October) the faithful and everbloomer Savarigata, a few on McBethii, which bloomed all summer and fall, a bud on Manicata aureo, four or five bud sprays on Conchaefolia, four buds on Mrs. Kimball, a bud and 8 leaves on Peltata which was a new cutting last June, and Jinnie May is full of buds and flowers. The Conchaefolia and Manicata are the handsomest plants I have now. I will confess that the cold water spray are grand for mealy bug—you can see the villians melt away, but—are not so good for mite, thrip or aphis. But the plants love it! Bare branches are putting out new leaves and general results are excellent.

I have been gadding again, to Conn. this time, and while there called on Joy Logee. They have a greenhouse and many fine Rex as well as a good collection of fibrous begonias. I also stopped at the Conn. State College at Storrs, Conn. and found a treasure. A goodly number of plants of B. Margaritaceae, that steel-gray hybrid of Arthur Mallett. They were good enough to give me a plant which is now in bloom.

Anothtr rare plant they have is Rheoe (or Tradescantia) discolor. It has a very foolish folk-name "Moses-in-the-cradle." That is worse than "Bird-on-the-wing," which is sometimes applied to a native plant, a Polygala. Another name for Rheoe is "Oyster Plant," which has some sense to it, as the flowers, small white, just like the Wandering Jew flowers are borne in an oyster shaped holder, in the axils of the leave. Although it is a Tradescantia, it is an upright grower with stiff upright stem and sword-shaped leaves, deep green above and rich purple below.

The last time I was in New York I went to the Botanical Garden and saw the new Mexican begonias. Only one was noteable, No. 73307. The leaf is shaped like a small Rex, with light green, almost Nile green with dark netted veins and dark spots, like Ecuador species, but not as pointed leaf of plain green, a bit like Ecquador species, but not as handsome. B. Malabarica is from the Botanical Garden at Hamburg, Germany. The leaf was three and a half inches long and two inches wide, green, hairy above, deeply and finely veined. The underside was paler and very hairy. The stems were hairy. The large flowers held well above the foliage, were palest pink, with golden stamens. The leaf had a serrate and notched edge like Pres. Carnot on a small scale.

From the Horticultural Society last week I got a book called Jardin Fleuriste, published in France in 1854. There are four beautiful colored plates of begonias. Hernandiatfolia, which has green leaves, with a gorgeous rose-red under surface and rose flowers. B. Rubrovenia, with white flowers veined with rose, B. Thwaitesii, a Rex type with pink and white flowers and B. Xanthina, with deep yellow flowers, flushed red underneath. Before these letters come again I hope to copy those pictures and translate the descriptions. I used to read French a good deal but it was not

(See Page 10)

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Why Early Blossoms? . . .

By K. O. SESSIONS

It is conspicous from central California to San Diego that the early flowering deciduous trees, apricots, peaches and others have been coming into flower fully a month earlier than in all previous years. It seems to indicate that the plants realized or felt that they must bloom earlier in order that the little rain that might come later would help to mature their fruit and seed.

I have also been observing that acacias were developing buds earlier and now during these few days of rain I am surprised at the amount of flowers that are showing on many varieties, some are in full bloom. Acacia pendula, one of the rare sorts, never showed flowers until March. In New York on March 1 I saw plants displayed in florists' windows and flowers for sale. They had been grown under glass with heat. It has been a popular sort for forcing in Europe and New York for many years, but rare in California. My one tree is almost in full bloom today, February 2.

Acacia Oblique is six weeks earlier and the dainty weeping and very uncommon A. acinacea is in full bloom. Last year it was April before it flowered. Acacia decora is a very low shrubby variety and it is very early. These low growing sorts promise to be excellent for the smaller gardens. Two new sorts I am trying this year.

Acacia prominens is extra fine, fully 50 feet tall, only 6 to 7 years old, straight as telephone pole and in full bloom from bottom to top, foliage very pleasing and unusual both in form and color, like the leptospermum laevigata foliage. Two plants two feet tall planted one year ago, both are over six feet tall and one is full of flowers.

GARDENING, PRESENT, PAST AND FUTURE

(Continued from Page 3)

March 6th, and as customary each private garden, this writer is not prepared to even suggest. "Every man for himself" is a good rule. Figure it out to suit yourself.

Your garden will be a reflection of your individuality anyway, and so whether you give greater weight to your open-faced garden "up front," or to your private garden at the back, which only you and your friends can enjoy, is for you to determine. If you work mostly for the public, you are entitled to credit for that; and if you work mostly for yourself, you have the satisfaction of knowing that you are in a very "large and respectable class."

A garden which is open to public observation at all times is not such that would appeal to this simple-minded writer, because not all who pass our gardens are going to be appreciative or complimentary. Indeed, we may be sure that there is a liberal sprinkling of critics, who not only fail to appreciate our efforts, but who may even belittle them. But why be pessimistic when we are talking about gardens? Gardens should be treated in an optimistic way. But here again I am keen for considering things as they are, rather than as they should be.

VISTA GARDEN CLUB

meeting thereafter will be on the first Friday of each month.

Acacia's Growing in San Diego

(Continued from Page 3)

A. pauciglandulosa . . . . . Scripps Biological Station.
A. penninervis (Hickory A) Australia Scripps Biological Station.
A. polybotrya var. foliosa . . . . Scripps Biological Station.
A. pinnata (Feather-leaved) . . . So. East cor. First and Spruce Sts.
A. podalyriaefolia (Pearl A.) Queensland . . . . . Balboa, Mission Hills and Presido Hills Parks.
A. pravissima (Screwpod A.) Victoria Mrs. F. C. Hughes, 2775 Chatsworth Boulevard.
A. pruinosa (Bronze A.) New S.Wales Balboa, Mission Hills and Presido Hills Parks.
A. pubescens (Hairy Wattle) New S. Wales . . . . . Miss K.O. Sessions, Soledad Terrace P.B.
A. pycnantha (Golden or Broad-leaved Wattle) S. Australia . Balboa Park.
A. retinodes (Water-Wattle) S. Australia . . . . . Balboa Park.
A. retinodes var. floribunda . . . . Balboa Park.
A. Riceana, Tasmania . . . . . 3563 7th St.
A. rubida . . . . . Scripps Biological Station.
A. salicina var. Wayœ (Dwarf Willow-Leaved) W. Australia . . Balboa Park.
A. spectabilis (Showy-A) . . . . Scripps Biological Station.
A. verticillata (Star or Whorled leaved) Victoria, Tasmania . . Balboa Park.
A. vestita . . . . . Scripps Biological Station.
A. viscidula (Sticky A) New S. Wales Miss K. O. Sessions and Washington Park (Old Town Plaza).

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Comfort and Joy in Gardening

(Continued from Page 2)

For really comfortable or enjoyable gardening in Southern California one thing should be constantly kept in mind—namely, the attainment and the etention of good soil texture, or of first class physical condition of the soil, and, as already stated, this can only be brought about in the majority of California soils by tillage or cultivation, on the one hand, and the addition of liberal supplies of organic material, on the other.

In our first article we gave a rather rough but extremely useful classification of natural organic material into (A.) Litter, or surface accumulation of dead leaves, etc. (B) Leaf mould, rough accumulation of decaying parts of plants. (C) Humus, or well-marked partially decayed and fine-grained, spongy vegetable substance. (D) Water and gases, or the final products of complete decomposition of vegetable and animal matter in various kinds of soils.

By far the most important and most useful function of natural organic material, such as leaf mould and humus, in the soils of Southern California is that of amelioration or improvement of soil texture. Here at this point it may be advisable to state just exactly what we mean by soils being in good physical condition, or of having first class texture. The term, then, may be defined as that physical condition of soils conveniently expressed by the qualitative words mellow, loose, porous, and easy, comfortable, or enjoyable to work. An ideal example is seen in that familiar combination known as potting soil, consisting for the most part of equal proportions of fine-grained garden loam or mountain loam, equally fine-grained humus or leaf mould, and river sand. When a handful of this finely granulated material is taken from the pile and the pressure of the fingers afterwards suddenly released, the whole handful of material readily falls apart, thus indicating its excellent texture, or first class physical condition.

Soils, on the other hand, which are considered to be in poor physical condition or of poor texture are those which are familiarly classified as compacted, lumpy, and too porous or leachy. Hard pan, adobe, and pure sand are well-known agony-producing examples of this class.

There are number of ways of ameliorating or improving agony-producing soils, including their innumerable perverse variations. Blasting and strenuous tillage are necessary preliminaries in the case of hard pan and adobe respectively, but the most practical method and the one most universally used both in nature and by man is that of periodically adding enormous quantities of vegetable matter in sufficient stages of decay to enable it to readily become incorporated with those faulty soils.

Adobe soils of various degrees of stubbornness, perversity and plain cussedness are common enough throughout Southern California, but in marked contrast to these undesirable qualities they are usually classified as amongst the richest soils in the world—that is, as far as necessary plant food is concerned. In order, however, to make this abundant food supply available for growing plants, the farmer and horticulturist, on the one hand, plough under enormous quantities of green cover crops, and the gardeners, on the other, incorporate with the soils enormous quantities of leaf mould and humus. In addition to all this, adobe soils with their numerous variants must be ploughed or dug at just exactly the right time, and large quantities of sand, and sometimes line, added in order to hasten the process of amelioration.

In some cases where the impatient gardener is desirous of more or less immediate results, it may be necessary to remove all or the greater part of the refractory top soil and replace it with a suitable mixture of leaf mould, humus, garden loam, and sand, taking care at the same time that there is sufficient drainage in the sub-soil. In far too many instances in Southern California the impatient gardener or the careless landscape architect has omitted to take proper drainage precations, and the ultimate results have been very disastraus to many valuable garden plants.

Again, in those numerous Southern California garden soils which belong to the other extreme, or are too porous to hold water, and are therefore known as leachy soils, the infallible remedy is well-decayed and fine-grained humus. Rough leaf mould should not be used in this case, as the roughage only adds to the already far too porous nature of the soil and greatly increases the drying out process during times of drought.

For all other types of soils intermediate between the two extremes just mentioned, and which are lacking in sufficient quantities of leaf mould and humus to make gardening an enjoyable pastime in Southern California, there should be procured, or there should be composted

(Continued on Page 12)

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Professor Howard E. McMinn's Illustrated Manuel of Pacific Coast Trees Hailed By Plant Explorer's . . .

By LESTER ROUNTREE

The interest in native plants is now so keen that each reliable book on the subject is welcomed with cheers and there seems to be a public for every type of work, whether meaty and intended for reference use or written with a popular appeal.

Professor Howard E. McMinn and Evelyn Maino have just turned out a book which is likely to satisfy the needs of both professionals and amateurs and to become an essential part of the plant explorer's equipment. It is an "Illustrated Manual of Pacific Coast Trees" (Univ. of California Press, $3.50). Professor McMinn is well known to all students of California native flora and has for some time experimented in growing various shrub species at Mills College where he is professor of botany.

It often happens in works of this kind, that each species rates two paragraphs of descriptive text. The botanist's eye is apt to seize upon the first and more technical of these two packets of information while the layman passes over it rather hazily and falls hopefully upon the second, where he usually finds something just about his speed. This second paragraph will sometimes act as bait, or as a sort of spur, toward further investigation, leading his eyes back to the preceding data and his inquiring nose a little further along the track toward real enlightenment in matters botanical.

Although Professor McMinn has not told me so, I imagine this book is the answer to questions which have been pouring in on him for several years. The greater number of our most satisfying books on horticultural affairs have had just such an origin—indeed, some are written in self-defense with the idea of forestalling further bombardment.

Professor McMinn's differs from the previous works on Pacific Coast trees in that it includes not only the natives but also about four hundred introduced species and varieties. This, as will be readily seen, makes it extremely useful, not only to students of native California plants, but to members of garden clubs and others with a non-technical interest in the subject. Also it greatly increases its value as a guide book.

The introduction is unusually interesting, especially the section which deals with the origin and distribution of native trees. The original illustrations, drawn chiefly by Evelyn Maino, co-author with Professor McMinn, are numerous and so clear and correct that the botanist will find them dependable and they will be a great help to those not accustomed to using a botanical key to genera and species. I like especially the end maps—of California inside the front cover and of British Columbia, Washington and Oregon at the back. It is always such a relief to have a map at hand. If one is lacking you are often too lazy to get up and look for one,

Landscape architects will (and nurserymen should) leap at H. W. Shepherd's lists of trees recommended for various uses on the Pacific Coast—a helpful feature too often omitted from books on flora and silva. These lists should help city fathers in their choice of avenue and street trees and perhaps reduce the mortality of trees used for this purpose as well as insuring a higher rate of appropriate plantings. There are lists of drought-tolerant and heat-tolerant trees, columnar trees and round trees, hedge trees, trees for sea-coasts, trees having colored autumn foliage and so on—all most helpful.

Children and Gardening

Gardening teaches a natural love for flowers, but it likewise teaches a love for Nature in all her manifestations and phases. Nature is the greatest study of mankind. And so, friends, this little preachment is based on the fact that Gardening in this country has now taken a form and a magnitude which is worthy of the consideration of every man, regardless of his profession, his trade, or whatever he may be engaged in as a life work.

Gardening should be taught to every child, and more and more it is being taught in the public schools. It is important that the young should grasp the meaning of Gardening in its primary phases, at a very early age. It is not right that we should wait until middle age, before taking an active interest in Gardening. Many of our readers can tell the same story—that their real interest in Gardening did not blossom until they were past the most active years of their life. Gardening may be taken up at any age; but why wait and lose the most active and receptive years of our lives, before taking up the most honorable and inspirational avocation to which the human race is heir?

BEGONIA CLUB NOTES

(Continued From Page 7.)

the botanical brand, and such words as Caulescent and Dehiscent are bad enough in English. The description is written in Latin also, to fall back on, but it is a hard fall, for, like Shakespere I "have little Latin and less Greek.")

"Bess."

(To be continued April issue)

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Question Box . . .

By R. R. McLEAN

. . . Fertilizing of Roses

QUESTION: What time of year should roses be fertilized? With what materials?

B. L. E.

ANSWER: Roses are heavy feeders and need rather constant supplies of fertilizer. However, the method and materials will vary with almost every grower. Some use animal manures in the late fall and quick acting nitrogenous materials in the spring. Others give their roses a dressing of blood and bone directly after pruning, in late January or early February, spading it in around each plant, and follow with a heavy top dressing of stable or chicken manure. Later on, in the early spring, liquid manures are fed the plants in order to stimulate growth and bloom. Almost any method of fertilizing, however, will give results if applied at the time the plants can use the material used. Summer and early fall fertilizing should be avoided.

QUESTION: Does bamboo ever flower? I have had a number of large clumps for years but have never yet seen any flowers either on mine or on others nearby.

S. M.

ANSWER: Bamboos flower very irregularly. It is said that as long a period as 50 years may elapse before certain species flower. After flowering, these long-time bloomers usually die. Other species may flower oftener, even annually, while others have never been observed to flower. The writer has himself never seen a bamboo in flower.

QUESTION: I am contemplating building a lath house. Can you advise me some rare and pretty flowers to put in it, also where can I get booklet on rock gardens and pools? What size do you think would be advisable for just one for my own use?

R. M.

ANSWER: There are many flowering plants suitable for lathhouse planting. In fact most of our flowers delight in some flickering shade such as a lath house affords in summer. Spring flowering bulbs, as tulips, hyacinths, ranunculus, anemones, and later, lilies, grow very well in partial shade. Begonias give color the year round under lath, the fibrous in winter and both tuberous and fibrous during the summer. Nemesias and Cinerarias also make a wonderful show in the winter.

A tasteful arrangement of a few rocks will probably be better in a small garden than an elaborate effect. Avoid using too many rocks the same size. A small pool, say 6 by 10 or even smaller, will supply a pleasing effect in your garden. One, say 5 by 3 or 4 feet will suffice if you are not planning to grow many water plants, such as water lilies, water hyacinths, etc.

The "Book of Water Gardening" by Peter Bisset is one of the best on water plants. The following books on Rock Gardening are also available: "Rock Gardens," by F. F. Rockwell; "A Simple Guide to Rock Gardening," by J. L. Cotter, and "American Rock Gardens," by Stephen F. Hamblin. These books can probably be obtained at the Public Library.

QUESTION: What ails my Streptosolen? When it was first planted it grew to a height of 7 feet the first summer. Since then it amounts to nothing. A branch will start but before it is an inch long the leaves turn yellow. It has had sprays and water, cultivation, fertilizer, etc. What shrubs thrive in a southwestern exposure against a shingle house?

F. T.

ANSWER: The Streptosolen may have root trouble. Dig down around the crown and see if you find galls on the crown or on the roots. Root knot nematodes, also, may be on the smaller roots. Their presence can be told by masses of small galls or knots on the roots. If you find anything at all out of the ordinary on the roots, and will bring or send a sample to the Agricultural office (Court House) a definite diagnosis can be made.

QUESTION: What can I do to kill aphis and ants around carnation and aster roots? Would like to kill the insects without injuring the plants.

Mrs. R. S.

ANSWER: A mixture of pyrethrum powder and tobacco dust—or nicodust—half and half, scattered around the plant stems, should be quite effective and at the same time not do any injury to the plants themselves. Another combination, sodium fluoride 6 parts, starch 2 parts and pyrethrum powder 2 parts, is often used for ant control in houses and might also be effective around plants. However, it is possible that sodium fluoride, if used in quantity, might injure the soil.

QUESTION: I have finished pruning my rose bushes and want to spray them. I have both Bordeaux powder and dry lime-sulphur. Which shall I use and in what proportions. Some buds are just breaking out—will they be injured by the spray?

S. P. R.

ANSWER: Either of the two sprays mentioned can be used—possibly the Bordeaux mixture would do less damage to tender growth than lime-sulphur. If Bordeau powder mixture is applied, use (1) pound of the powder to five (5) gallons of water. This is equivalent in strength to what is known as the 5-5-50 formula, or 5 pounds of copper sulphate, 5 pounds of quick lime and 50 gallons of water. Dry lime-sulphur is also used at the rate of 1 pound to 5 gallons of water for dormant plants. This would

(Continued on Page 12)

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QUESTION BOX

(Continued from Page 11)

be much too strong, however, for rose bushes with much tender growth.

QUESTION: What sort of plants shall I get to make a hedge? I want the hedge to be tight. What size plants shall I buy, the small or large?

J. M. C.

ANSWER: There are a number of privets (Ligustrum) you can get, or you can use the old reliable Monterey cypress. Of the privets, perhaps the two best are L. sinensis, or Small-Leaved Evergreen Privet and L. ovalifolium, California privet. The first, as its common name implies, has rather small leaves and is probably the best of this group. It can be pruned to medium height. The California privet has medium-sized leaves and is very hardy although partly deciduous. There is still a third privet sometimes used, known as the Golden Privet, its leaves being variegated or golden in color.

There is very little to be gained in buying large sized plants. This is equally as true with Monterey cypress as with privets. If the large plants have been balled or potted for any length of time they will be quite slow to start. Even if freshly balled, there has been a considerable loss of root ystem and it will be months before this loss is replaced. Small plants, such as come in "flats," will overtake the larger ones in a year or so. In addition to this, the latter cost from one-third to one-fifth as much.

QUESTION: What would you recommend to cover a heavy pergola? I want some vine that is an evergreen? Does the passion vine make a satisfactory one for that purpose?

Mrs. B. L.

Answer: Although the passion vine is sometimes used for the purpose you have in mind, the writer cannot recommend it because of its susceptibility to attack by certain worms. Occasionally they become so numerous that the vines are entirely defoliated. You have, however, a choice of several very fine evergreen vines for pergola covering. There are a number of species of bigonias or trumpet flowers, all of them flowered; the red shades of bougainvillea can hardly be surpassed for climbers; the South African grape, Cissus (vitis) capensis, is among the very best and the Solandra or cup of gold makes an exceedingly showy covering when in bloom. Then there are the jasmines, the honeysuckle and the wire vine.

The writer's own preference is for one of the red bougainvilleas or for the evergreen grape. The latter is particularly fine—bearing clusters of large reddish-black fruits which are edible.

Comfort and Joy in Gardening

(Continued from Page 9)

on the premises a sufficient supply of decaying vegetable and animal matter ready to take the place of the constantly deteriorating organic material already in the soil.

This brings us to the last question enumerated at the beginning of our first article—namely: is there any way of manufacturing or producing organic material in sufficient quantities to meet our particular gardening, horticultural, and farming needs? and we answer: there certainly is. As we are confining our attention to gardening in this article, we may state that the most simple and effective way of producing enough organic material for our gardening needs is to build a compost pile in an out-of-the way corner of our garden, screening it with shrubbery or with a fence on which climbers, such as Thunbergia gibsonii, for example are allowed to play and frolic. A compost pile is built as follows. "Make a hole above ground," as the Irishman would say, a square hole made of strong detachable planks. Place at the bottom of the hole sufficient drainage material to allow surplus water to run off and place over this a layer of garden soil; then alternate layers of a mixture of garden refuse, kitchen garbage, and animal remains, with fairly thick layers of garden soil. When you reach the top of the pile, top it with another fairly thick layer of garden soil, and water occasionally during the dry summer months. In a few months' time the compost will be ready for the garden, and by detaching one side of the enclosure easy access can be gained to the pile and the contents easily removed. If one is ambitious enough he could have two enclosures above ground, one for immediate use, and one to store up the ever accumulating composting material.

In conclusion, let me briefly tabulate some of the many benefits to be derived from the periodical addition of humus, leaf mould, and composted material to our various kinds of Southern California garden soils. (1). Organic materials in the form of leaf mould, humus, and compose are our greatest garden soil amelioratorS. (2). On account of the open, porous, or spongy nature of the finer parts of the above materials the open or porous spaces in the soil itself are much increased and consequently aeration of the soil is greatly improved. (3) The spongy nature of humus and the finer particles of leaf mould and compost add very much to the water-holding capacity of Southern California garden soils and aids greatly the capillary movements of water to where it is most needed by the roots of plants. (4). The granular nature and porosity of the above materials form a most effective drainage system in most California soils, facilitating the growth of roots, and thus in turn increasing the capacity of growing plants to obtain larger supplies of food material, which, of course, ultimates in larger and healthier plants or crops. (5). The dark colour of the various organic materials just mentioned increases heat absorption, and this function is especially valuable during the many days of so-called winter sunshine. (6). Humus and the finer particles of leaf mould and compost are the source of valuable food material for living plants, and they help to a remarkable degree in making available the locked-up plant food in otherwise refractory soils.

P. S.—There has been no mention made of barnyard manure and artificial fertilizers in this article as these should be considered only as supplemental to natural organic material.

K. F. S. D.

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